

Using Tablets For Board Members-Another Step Toward Going Green

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Tablets are more than a fun and easy way to surf the web, stay in touch with friends or order your latest household items. These great technological devices allow access to just about any data imaginable while you're on an airplane, waiting at the dentist or from the comfort of your living room. Tablets can be a valuable tool for Association managers and Board members to be more efficient, effective and utilize amazing technology to go green.

Why use tablets? Tablets allow board members to have access to years' worth of documents, access to content from anywhere, efficiencies in operations, transfer of community history to subsequent board members and their use takes another step toward going "green". The use of tablets increases efficiency by becoming one source for all association information. Tablets provide board members with instant access to board packets and financial reports, governing documents, association contracts, minutes, resolutions, legal opinions, site plans, maps, and educational information. They also offer the opportunity to board members to attend meetings by telecommuting, a big benefit in reducing cancelled meetings due to lack of quorum. Simply put, it allows board members to have a wealth of information available to quickly answer their own questions and make informed business decisions.

In 2011, The Avalon Management Group, Inc., AAMC® set out to determine the level of effectiveness of using tablets when implemented in the CID industry. After beta testing every tablet on the market, we determined that Apple's iPad is the most effective solution for our needs. The performance and reliability of the iPad made it an easy choice over its competitors. While the initial investment is significantly higher than other tablets on the market, we found that the investment was worthwhile due to very few technical problems encountered during testing. Candidly, client feedback after the first few months of implementing the beta iPad program was how much fun Board members were having using the iPads to be more efficient.

Following two years of field testing with Board members, managers, accountants and senior management, we received overwhelmingly positive feedback. Board members were amazed at how convenient it became to review board packets, financials or photos to prepare for upcoming meetings. Using wifi access and/or Broadband connection from the cellular company, Board members are able to access up to the minute information from virtually anywhere in the world. The ease of access to current and historical documents, legal opinions, financial data, homeowner history and other pertinent information continually increases the efficiency and effectiveness for long-time Board members and newcomers alike.

Many clients have become accustomed to using the tablet to search the governing documents or Board reports in PDF format, making their job easier than having to search hard copies manually. Board member email addresses were created using their Association's website domain (president@yourhoa.com) which gives Board members a non-personal email address to use for Association Business. Board members really liked the Association specific email as it would give incoming Board members access to historic information in addition to reducing the likelihood that their personal email be subpoenaed in the event of legal matters.

One of the most important factors in addition to easy access of information is the cost savings in reduced paper and the ability to take one more step toward green technology. On average, we calculated a savings of 15,000 sheets of paper each year, per association. With over 323,000 Associations across the United States, think of how much paper the CID industry could save by using this technology. Also consider the savings in toner, printer repair and maintenance, labor and postage costs associated with the distribution of paper monthly board information packets. Your Management Company and Association can save thousands a year by utilizing this green technology.

While there are many factors to consider regarding implementation and technicalities of utilizing tablets for your Association or your clients, the use of tablets for board members has proven highly beneficial, in our experience. This use of technology has proven to be a win-win for all involved.

Blake began working in the CID industry in 2009 when he joined Southern California's premiere Association Management company, Avalon Management Group, Inc., AAMC® quickly advancing to the position of Senior Manager. Mr. Morlet attended Chapman University in Orange, CA earning a Bachelor of Science in Business Management. Mr. Morlet was born and raised in Southern California and is also a licensed California Real Estate Broker and technology professional. Mr. Morlet was a featured presenter at the CAI National Conference held in Orlando, Florida in May 2014.